

What is claimed is:

1 1. A dental instrument comprising:

2 an actuating assembly; and

3 a grasping assembly, coupled to the actuating assembly, adapted to conform to the
4 contour of a dental appliance;

5 wherein a member of the actuating assembly or the grasping assembly is adapted to
6 facilitate distal, mesial, or both distal and mesial manipulation of the dental appliance.

1 2. The instrument of claim 1, wherein the grasping assembly comprises a plurality of
2 members, each having a grasping surface.

1 3. The instrument of claim 2, wherein the members are angled to approximate the
2 contour of the dental appliance.

1 4. The instrument of claim 2, wherein the members are curved to approximate the
2 contour of the dental appliance.

1 5. The instrument of claim 4, wherein the members are curved concavely.

1 6. The instrument of claim 4, wherein the members are curved convexly.

1 7. The instrument of claim 2, wherein a first of the members comprises an apical seat
2 near the top of its grasping surface.

1 8. The instrument of claim 2, wherein one of the members comprises a traction feature
2 disposed upon its grasping surface.

1 9. The instrument of claim 1, wherein the grasping assembly is removably coupled to
2 the actuating assembly.

1 10. The instrument of claim 1, wherein the grasping assembly is permanently coupled to
2 the actuating assembly.

1 11. The instrument of claim 1, wherein the grasping assembly is formed as part of the
2 actuating assembly.

1 12. The instrument of claim 2, wherein a portion of the actuating assembly is angled to
2 facilitate exclusively distal manipulation of the dental appliance.

1 13. The instrument of claim 2, wherein a portion of the actuating assembly is curved to
2 facilitate exclusively mesial manipulation of the dental appliance.

1 14. The instrument of claim 2, wherein a portion of the grasping assembly is angled to
2 facilitate exclusively distal manipulation of the dental appliance.

1 15. The instrument of claim 2, wherein a portion of the grasping assembly is curved to
2 facilitate exclusively distal manipulation of the dental appliance.

1 16. The instrument of claim 1, wherein the actuating assembly is a bifurcated actuating
2 assembly.

1 17. The instrument of claim 1, further comprising a locking assembly disposed along the
2 actuating assembly.

1 18. The instrument of claim 2, wherein a portion of the actuating assembly is formed to
2 selectively facilitate mesial or distal manipulation of the dental appliance.

1 19. A dental instrument, adapted to facilitate distal, mesial, or both distal and mesial
2 manipulation of a dental appliance, comprising:

3 a grasping assembly, having a grasping surface shaped to approximate contour of the
4 dental appliance, and having an apical seating member disposed near the top of the grasping
5 surface; and

6 an actuating assembly, operatively coupled to the grasping assembly.

1 20. A matrix band placement apparatus, adapted to facilitate distal, mesial, or both distal
2 and mesial matrix band manipulation, comprising:

3 a first grasping member, having a first surface shaped to approximate curvature of a
4 matrix band, having an apical seating member disposed along an upper edge of the first
5 surface;

6 a second grasping member, having a first surface shaped to approximate curvature of
7 a matrix band and shaped to cooperatively engage with the first surface of the first grasping
8 member; and

9 a compound actuating assembly, operatively coupled to the first and second grasping
10 members, adapted to cooperatively engage the first and second grasping members, having a
11 locking assembly disposed and adapted to secure engagement of the first and second
12 grasping members.